

Following The Pulse of Alberta Show Jumping

Alberta Show Jumpers

March 2015

On the Cover:
Chris Surbey and Chili Pepper SM
at HITS Thermal 2015
Photo by Grayt Designs

Breeding Your Champion
Bob Henselwood

Setting Goals
Holly Grayton

**'What's
Been Happening'**

Cross Training
with Tina Watkins

OCD Explained
Dr Shawn Mattson



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Alberta Show Jumpers

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Thank you for picking up our second edition for 2015! The show jumping year is already in full swing with all the winter circuits underway. With so many

great accomplishments already on the books, this is surely going to be an exciting year for Albertans. Remember to check in to our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts to get the most up-to-date information. There are Albertans all over the globe and we intend to keep you in the loop about everything we can to help grow our great show jumping community.

If you have any article ideas or need to know anything in particular, please get in touch with us - we want to give you what you want.

Happy reading! info@albertashowjumpers.com
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Holly Grayton
Editor-in-Chief

Contributing Writers

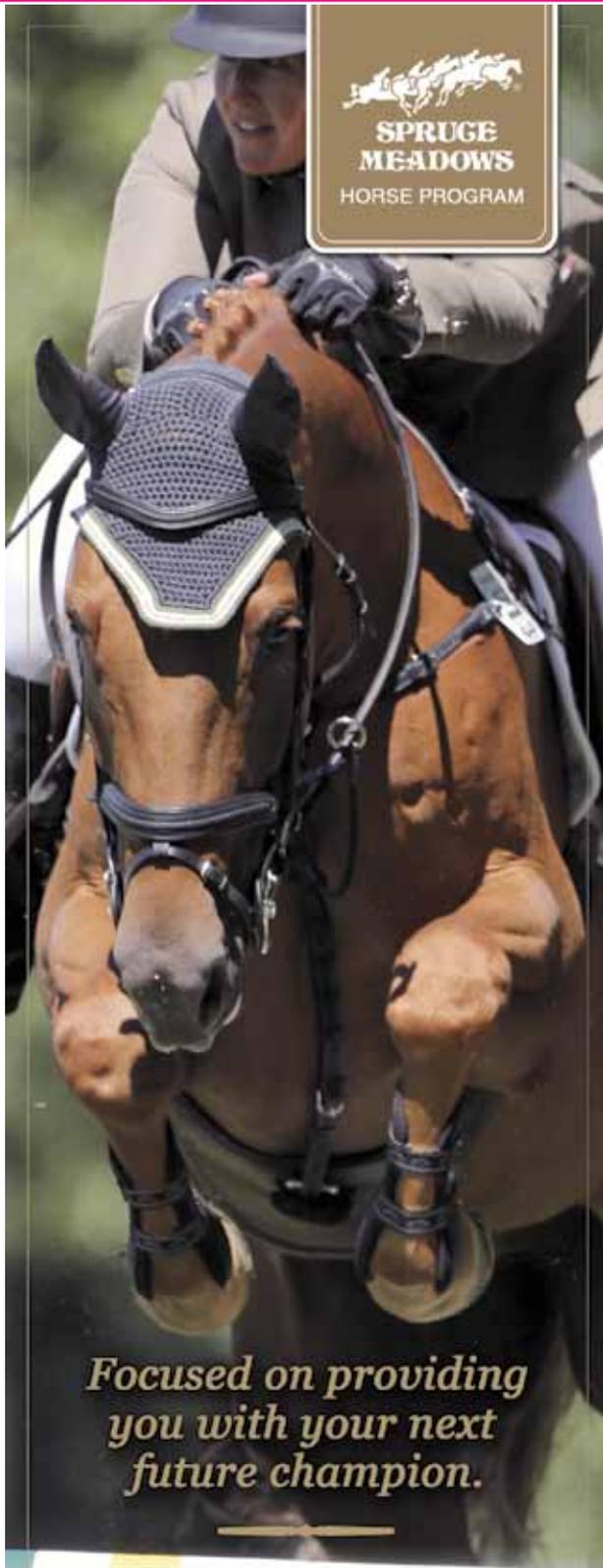
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What's Been Happening?

Horse shows are in full swing all around the world. After what can be considered a very short break for the holiday season, Albertans have jumped back into action with their horses at winter show circuits in Thermal, CA, Tucson, AZ, Wellington and Ocala, FL, as well as the winter competition venues indoors at Spruce Meadows and Rocky Mountain Show Jumping here in Alberta.

In the early weeks of the circuits there have been some very impressive accomplishments by Albertans. Calgary's Vanessa Mannix topped a large field to win the \$15,000 Show Jumping Hall of Fame High Amateur Classic in Wellington aboard her own Valerie FS (Indoctro x Ahorn). In fact, Vanessa has been on a roll, having claimed top prizes each week in amateur classes as well as international competitions.

One of Canada's favorite stars, Ben Asselin, started his 2015 season with solid results on a couple of new horses. Now midway through the Wellington circuit, Ben has resumed showing with his Nations Cup veteran partner Makavoy (Hors la Loi II x Ahorn), having just claimed 7th place in the sixth round of the WEF Challenge Cup.

Across the continent in Thermal, Edmonton's dynamic duo Jaelyn Duff and Elizabeth Gingras continue their rise to the top of the sport in Canada. Jaelyn was the winner of the \$50,000 GoRentals Grand Prix week three of the circuit, after coming 2nd in the TuffRider Grand Prix the first week – both aboard Pater Noster (Parco x Heartbreaker). Elizabeth Gingras claimed several placings in the opening weeks of competition with Zilversprings (Silverstone x Emilion). Three Alberta riders (and four Alberta horses) were in the top 10 in the first World Cup qualifier in Thermal – Kara Chad was 6th and 9th with Alberto II (Acorado I x Cassini I) and Zamiro 16 (Zenturio x Landstreicher) respectively, Bretton Chad was 7th with The Pugilist (Douglas x Freddie's Star

xx), and Elizabeth Gingras 8th with Zilversprings (Silverstone x Emilion).

Another bright spot for Albertans is in the all-important young horse divisions. These events are designed to develop the next generation of equine athlete, and may be the birthplace of the next superstars. Jenna Thompson is competing successfully with Attache Stables' Clockwise (Contendro x Cantus) and Lookout (Le Primeur x Polydor) in the 6 year old division in Wellington. Chris Surbey claimed victory and championships in the 6 year old division in Thermal aboard Spruce Meadows' Chili Pepper (Calido x Graf Top) and Evergreen (Farmer x Iago C).

Femke Courchaine (nee van den Bosch) won the first Grand Prix of the season in Tucson with her trusty gelding Tom Tom (Calvados x Joost), while Lorrie Jamieson started strong as well with her stallions KVF Tacorde (Concorde x Goodtimes) and KVF Zeno (Quattro x Burggraaf). Both Femke and Lorrie have several young horses with them in Arizona to develop as well, having already put together a very impressive string of victories.

Alberta Show Jumpers is the source for daily results and news from Alberta's horses and riders competing around the world. Find us on Facebook and support your colleagues, friends, and heroes!



GET TO KNOW JUSTIN PRATHER

How old were you when you started riding?

I started riding when I was about 5 years old.

Where did you ride growing up?

I rode mostly at our cabin at Square Butte Ranch near Millarville doing pony club and trail rides for a few years, then moved to True North Stables where I first started taking lessons from Jenn Serek. Eventually I moved along to Juniper Farms in Ontario with Jill Henselwood.

When did you start showing?

When I was 8 or 9 years old, in the BRAVE series around Calgary.

Do you get nervous?

Yes, but normally not until the course map is posted. I guess there is nothing to worry about until you know how hard the course will be.

What do you do to help with your nerves?

I try to get in the zone by focusing on the immediate tasks that need to be done before I get in the ring, like getting my horse and myself ready. I try not to think about the course and how big the jumps are until I am in the warm up ring and ready to go.

What horses do you have now? What are they all like?

My best, and favorite, horse right now is Beau Soleil. She is a Belgian Warmblood chestnut mare and she is the best partner I could ask for. She was never actually meant to be my horse, but three years ago I was given a chance on her and haven't looked back since! She's a bit of a princess - if treats are being given out in the barn aisle, she had better be getting one.

What could you not live without?

My computer. I am fascinated by technology and always want to learn about something new, and there's no better place to find out about anything than the Internet.

What is your most embarrassing horse show moment?

The youngest person to ever compete in the International Ring eliminated me in the first round of the double slalom at Spruce Meadows ... and it was on national TV.

Show Schedule For Albertans

March 2015

March 4-8 Thermal CA Week 7

March 5-8 Spruce Meadows AB Winter Farewell

March 11-15 Thermal CA Week 8

March 12-15 Spruce Meadows AB Spring Welcome

March 20-22 RMSJ AB Training

March 30-April 4 Brandon MB Winter Fair

April 2015

April 10-19 RMSJ AB Training

April 17-19 Willow Grove AB Season Opener

April 24-26 Amberlea AB Spring Welcome

April 25-26 Spruce Meadows AB April Classic

May 2015

April 30-May3 Spruce Meadows AB May Classic

May 6-10-RMSJ AB Bow Valley I

May 7-10 Spruce Meadows AB May Classic II

May 13-17- RMSJ AB Bow Valley Classic II CSI**

May 15-18 Caledonia Classic AB

May 20-24 RMSJ AB Bow Valley Classic III CSI**

May 20-24 Tbird BC Canadian Premier

May 21-24 Edmonton Classic AB

May 27-31 Tbird BC Open

Albertans on the FEI Ranking List

Alberta Ranking	Canada Ranking	World Ranking	Rider
1	6	216	Ben Asselin
2	9	297	Lisa Carlsen
T-3	11	316	John Anderson
T-3	11	316	Elizabeth Gingras
5	13	336	Tamie Phillips
6	15	385	Jaclyn Duff
7	18	449	Kara Chad
8	24	610	Bretton Chad
9	26	651	Lorrie Jamieson
10	30	741	Shauna Cook
11	31	760	Nicole Gergely
12	32	786	Brenda Riddell
13	33	809	Vanessa Mannix
T-14	34	834	Ellicia Edgar
T-14	34	834	Jenn Serek

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Setting Goals

Holly Grayton

Show season has started; in fact I am already home from competing in Thermal. So should I have set my goals for this year already?

Yes.

But I haven't. So here is a crash course on getting set up with setting goals.

Last year my friend Gail Greenough said to me, "You've got to set goals, and not just short-term goals, but medium and long-term goals."

Ok so; I want to feel confident, I want to jump 1.30m., I want to stay jumping 1.30m and be competitive.

So that's done, phew!

Oh no, wait, that isn't the whole thing because I am going to need a plan for how to actually accomplish this.

To help plan and set goals, I like to write webs with the goal in the middle and the 'how' and the 'why' all around it. This may seem

obvious to everyone, but when you aren't accomplishing your goals you might be able to look back at your web and see exactly why things aren't coming together.

Short-Term Goal: Confidence

We already know I didn't have my confidence goal defined before I went to Thermal. Reason? I didn't do half the things on my 'Confidence' web. No lessons, no coach to call on, not enough practice, etc. I did, however accomplish a lot of these things while I was in Thermal after finding a great coach in the legendary Susie Hutchison. We lessoned the first week only (no showing, and got some things figured out). We practiced some exercises I would see in the ring and started small. I also had a friend I called every day for support and started visualizing the feeling I wanted in the ring each night. As they say, 'Failure to prepare is to prepare for failure.' Lesson learned - come prepared to the show.



Medium-Term Goal:

Jump 1.30m (This year's goal)

This is a tough one for me. It seems it has been just out of reach for years. One of the major components to accomplishing this goal is having a horse that has *been there and done it* before to help me build my own confidence. My current horse has not jumped that big before, and it would likely be a lot to ask of him. So when Susie asked me if I thought I could be competitive in reaching my goals with him, I had to answer no. Bummer. Although I knew it would be a lot to ask him to jump his first 1.30m's while it was also my first 1.30m I hadn't quite connected the dots that it was more a dream than a reality. Lucky for me, my husband had his retired Grand Prix horse in the field and offered that if I worked to get him fit and bring him back, he could teach me the ropes. Yes! Ok, here we go! But accomplishing this goal also means making a smart schedule. Will I take this horse to the Summer Series at Spruce Meadows – one of the toughest places to compete, and where I would likely need to drop down a level? Probably not the best plan to get to my goal. I need to make smart decisions about where to show so that I can get to where I want to go.

Continued on page 10

For goal setting web template go to:
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Long-term goal: Stay there!
(Likely the hardest one of all)

This web may constantly evolve, because the components will build on and evolve from both prior webs. It will include building confidence by having consistent lessons, asking for help, keeping perspective by aligning my horse's ability with my goals so that I'm not expecting too much from him, picking my shows appropriately, and so on. After I master the new level then I would try my hand at places like Spruce Meadows where the courses and competition are top in our sport.

Surround yourself with good people no matter what your goals. You are going to need support when times get tough and advice from people that are actually pulling for you. In short, goal-setting isn't just deciding "I want to go to the Olympics." It's a string of conscious decisions on how to get where you want to be, who you need to help you do it, and of course sitting on the right horse.

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SANDRA SOKOLOSKI BSCPT, FCAMPT, CGIMS

BREATHING THE

Most people understand that breathing is important to get oxygen into our bodies as fuel for our body tissues. Many people have heard that correct breathing is important in yoga. However, few people know that how you breathe can drastically affect your health in the long term and your riding performance in the short term.

The ideal breathing pattern for daily life and sport is into the lower ribs. Put your hands on the outside of your rib cage and ensure that your shoulders don't move and your belly doesn't puff out. Allow the air into the back of your lower ribs and feel that your ribs open out to the side. If you tighten your stomach muscles, as if someone was going to try and push your belly in, you should still have good rib mobility. This allows you to have good core activation while walking, riding and exercising. If not talking, eating or exercising heavily, the lips should be sealed, the teeth parted and the mid tongue resting against the roof of the mouth. The breath out should be two counts longer than the breath in. Use the horse steps as your count if you are riding.

'How you breathe affects your performance.'

All of these elements combined help to calm the nervous system (overcome show ring nerves), relax the upper body (free up your arms and stop pulling), allows the spine to move in a supported way (gives your seat more stability without bracing), and prevents your heart from overworking. Research has shown that heart rate can increase to 80-100% of the maximal safe range while jumping a course in competition.

Breath holding or breathing in a different pattern may further increase the heart rate. If a rider breathes too shallowly (shoulders move), quickly, or with mouth open, even for a minute or so, their judgment ('should I move up or wait') and short term memory ('where IS my next fence') may be affected.

Practice this breathing pattern in all aspects of your life (sitting in your car is a great place) and discover how much more easily you can calm your nerves while waiting for your round, soften your arms and secure your seat. Breathe well, live well, move well, ride well!!

(If you want to know more about the long term health effects of sub optimal breathing look up 'hypocapnia' or contact Sandra at sasok@shaw.ca)

Photo Credit Lynne Burns



LOSING LIKE A WINNER

Kaitlyn McAleese

A How-to Guide for Tantrum Throwers, Cry Babies, and Poor Sports.

Sportsmanship is a tricky subject. We all think we know what it means, yet at the same time nobody thinks they're doing it wrong. Whether you've been in the sport for a hot minute or you've dedicated your life to it, you can bet you've called someone a poor sport at one point or another. In fact, I would go as far as to say that how you conduct yourself among your peers is the most important performance you give at a horse show. Everyone has rails and refusals and falls off from time to time, but (thankfully) not everyone throws their stick at the groom or yells at their mother for bringing Dasani instead of SmartWater. Even so, it wasn't until I had the pleasure of working with some truly classy sportsmen as well as the misfortune of standing in the in-gate with an utterly bottom-of-the-barrel sore loser, that I came to understand just how important sportsmanship is to equestrian sports in particular.

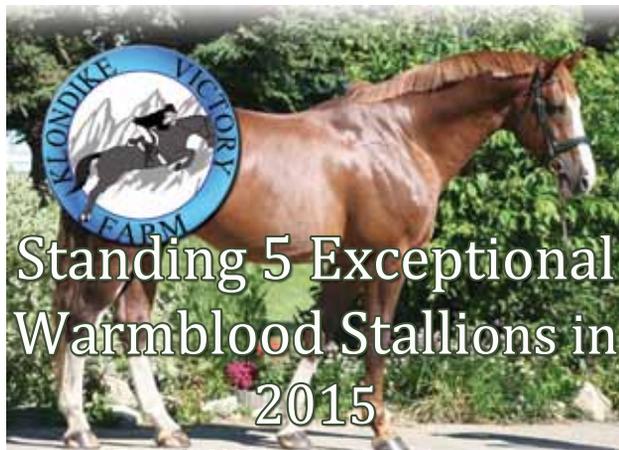
The worst of the worst came when I was taking care of a really special equitation horse for a girl that won more than anyone I've ever known. You may think you know where this is going, but let me say first that she practiced more than anyone else, she cleaned her own tack, she said thank you and she legitimately tried, which is not as common as you might think. Rarely did she compete against someone who rode better than she did, but I truly believe that was because she was working harder. However, during a national final that year, this same girl cried through the entire awards presentation when she came second. As in, sponsors were trying to take pictures with her and shower her with gifts and she had her head in her hands audibly sobbing. At first I thought it was kind of funny, but it was around the time she threw herself on the floor of the grooming stall wailing into her mother's

lap that it stopped being funny and started being horrifying. The day she lost, she did not clean her own tack, she did not go get ice for her horse, and she did not say thank you. However, she did say a half-hearted 'congratulations' to the winner, which was applauded by her parents and trainer as being very sportsmanlike and noble, given that she had deserved to win. Maybe she did, but that isn't the part people will remember about that class or that rider. At the very least, it's not the part I will remember. Unfortunately for her, I will only remember her spectacularly bad attitude and the fact that it didn't matter how graciously she won if she couldn't lose like a winner too.

Is sportsmanship about working hard, saying thank you, and congratulating the winner? Yes. Is that all it's about? Absolutely not. As five year olds playing house-league soccer learn, you have to shake hands and say 'good game' to the other team whether you win or lose, but I'm not sure they're learning why that's so important. The reason we do that is out of respect for the sport, for everyone on your team, and for everyone playing on the other team as well. In show jumping, it becomes complicated because the list of people on the team is so long. Of course there are the riders, but there are also the horses, trainers, parents, grooms, horse show staff, owners, sponsors, and so many others who are on the team too. When that girl cried during the presentations, she was disrespecting the people trying to honour her accomplishment, the rider who had won, her parents who did everything in their power to support her dream, the trainer who was an integral part of all the success she had enjoyed, the groom who cared for and prepared the horse, and of course, the horse himself who owed her nothing and always did his best. In essence, her behaviour disrespected the sport to which she and so many others dedicate so much time and effort.

At the end of the day, sportsmanship is about being an exemplary person in everything you do and say, but fundamentally it is an appreciation of the fact that to be a sportsman is a privilege and should be treated as such. Riding is hard and losing is harder, but not in the way that true hardship is, and I think that to be a sportsman

is to remember that. To be able to wake up everyday playing a game you're passionate about with animals you love and people who feel the same way, is a gift. The first time I brought a horse to the ring for a World Cup class, the horse stopped at the water and the rider left the ring on his feet, completely soaked in artificially blue water. Obviously it was disappointing, but what really stuck with me about that day was that on the way out of the ring the rider apologized to me. In that moment, I'd never felt more like a part of the team. We'd both been at the show all day, the horse had been flatted, bathed, iced, braided, and pep talked, all for six jumps and a big dry cleaning bill. However the next day, we would both get to wake up, start again, and spend the whole day doing something we love all over again, and as a nod to that incredible reality he conducted himself with integrity, as only a true sportsman can. If you can do that, I guarantee more people will want to work their hardest for you and as a result, you can get back to practicing winning like a winner, which even the best of sports can agree is the fun part anyway.



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Andrew More is a Calgary-based professional rider and trainer, working out of Bar None Ranches and also in conjunction with Erin Taylor of Ironstone Farms. Originally from Vancouver, Andrew moved to Calgary in 2000 after spending many years working for top show stables in California, Washington and British Columbia. Andrew is a past winner of the Western Canadian Talent Squad series, and continues to ride at a high level himself while coaching his students in the hunter and jumper divisions across North America. For more information about Andrew, visit his website www.horseventures.ca.



In this first photograph we see a nicely turned out horse and rider combination jumping a good sized square oxer. The rider shows good leg position with her heel slightly lower than her toe which puts her in good balance over this large jump and also allows her to help her horse across the back rail, if necessary, by closing her leg. Her eyes are up showing good focus and helping to keep her in good balance on the landing portion of the jump. Her hands are ahead of her shoulder, which is also part of an effective and balanced position. The horse has a keen expression with his ears forward and seems to be giving good effort over this jump. The slightly open front legs of the horse over top of this oxer suggest the horse is reaching a bit for the back rail of the jump. For that reason, I would prefer to see more of

an automatic release with the rider's hands slightly lower and making a straight line from elbow to bit ensuring there is no restriction to the horse's jumping effort.

In the second photograph we see another well turned out horse and rider combination. The horse shows classical form and athleticism over this square oxer with an expression that is all business. The horse looks to be handling this sized jump with ease and rider is clearly very comfortable over the jump. We again see a correct leg position and although the toe is a bit more turned and the heel not quite as low as the first rider, there is no mistaking the relaxed and secure quality of this rider's leg. Her eyes are up, looking across the jump and her hand is ahead of the shoulder again showing key

elements of correct jumping position. Although this horse is jumping with ease, like the last rider, I would like to see more of an automatic release with the rider's hand a bit lower and making a straight line from elbow to bit. The release is not an issue for the horse and rider in this photograph but it is something I think could be made even more effective to jump even bigger and more difficult jumps.

The third photograph shows us another square oxer being jumped with great effort by a well turned out pair. This photo is taken a bit more head-on than the others but we can still see a very secure leg position with the heel down and the rider's calf firmly against the horse's side. The horse is jumping quite high, with its belly almost

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to the top of the standards, and although it's front legs are not as tight as the last horse it is having no trouble over this jump. We assume the rider is looking at the next fence with her eyes to the side showing good focus and awareness over the jump. Her hands are ahead of her shoulder and we see that nice straight line from elbow to bit of the automatic release. We can see the slack in the rein so even though her hand is lower than the other two riders, she is still able to give her horse as much release as necessary across the jump while maintaining control or influence over her horse.

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CANDIDS





1. Cathy Chalack pleased with Chicago's round **2.** Mrs. Beattie watching Andrea Beattie's round **3.** Julia Tops and John Pundyk preparing **4.** The Juniper crew headed for a course walk **5.** Holly Grayton and Mel Laydon performing pairs **6.** Vanessa Mannix after her big win **7.** Chris Surbey, Kelly Koss-Brix and Ellicia Edgar happy to be in California **8.** Ellicia Edgar and Ascora Z ready for the week **9.** Alex Grayton out for a stroll **10.** 'Hot Rod' Rodney Tulloch's game face **11.** Yay Jaclyn Duff winning the Go Rentals Grand Prix!! **12.** John Anderson still has to work.

Breeding Your Champion

By Bob Henselwood

I believe you should have a clear idea of what it is you are trying to produce before you ever get into the breeding business.

Most people would say they are trying to produce a Grand Prix horse. That is completely unrealistic and most often leads to disappointment. Grand Prix horses come from very large numbers (tens of thousands) of foals, the likes of which you will only find in Europe. It is only the top 2% of jumping horses born that become Grand Prix horses.

A more realistic goal is a high amateur horse that you can make some profit on by raising and developing the horse. A good amateur 1.30m or 1.40m horse will bring \$50-100k as a young horse. It's going to cost approximately \$25k to raise a foal until it is three years old and get it broke enough to truly evaluate its value. The Grand Prix horses come from these ranks, but not very often.

There are a few fundamentals of breeding that should be reviewed before anyone decides to start breeding show horses. First of all, most sport horses today are warmbloods. There are a few Thoroughbreds competing in show jumping, but the Thoroughbred has never been selected for its ability to jump fences with the exception of steeplechase horses. The few good Thoroughbred horses competing are usually very structurally sound individuals as they are selected for the ability to race at two and three years of age. They have great stamina, and the good ones last for many years.

The warmbloods are falsely thought of as breeds.

The only difference between a Dutch Warmblood and a Belgian warmblood is the fact that the horse was born in Holland or Belgium. Each breed association promotes their own horses as if they are somehow different from each other. The good stallions are universally recognized and crossbreeding between associations is the norm, not the exception. The good horses tend to be welcome in all breed associations.

That brings us to the financial aspects of breeding. Broodmares, foals, yearlings, and two year olds should be raised outside with access to a run-in shed. They never have to come into stalls unless they are ill or injured. They do, however, need to be handled regularly to promote ease of handling for the vet and farrier. The most economical way to raise them is in small groups, feeding them round bales and grain as required.

Despite this, it will still cost the breeder approximately \$5k per year per horse. The horses still have to have their feet done regularly, vaccinations, and someone has to look after them daily. Considering that the average foal will cost \$7.5k (stud fees, vet charges, broodmare care for a year and a half before it is born) and a live foal will be born roughly 75% of the time, breeders need to produce a foal worth \$10k to break even. It is going to take three years to determine if the foal that was born is a good horse or not. By that time the breeder will have approximately \$25k invested in it.

There are a number of characteristics to consider when selecting a broodmare. To start, the broodmare should be the best horse in the barn and have a good show record. The goal is to breed for those exact qualities, so the broodmare should possess the desired characteristics.

Size matters! Although there are some notable exceptions, the smaller the horse, the harder it is for them to get down a line on course based on a 12 foot stride length. It's a good rule of thumb that a broodmare should be at least 16hh. A broodmare should be evaluated based on scope, jumping technique, carefulness and heart, all on a scale from 1-10. Body size, height and weight are

factors that affect quickness across the ground, and modern show jumping is fast and careful!

When choosing a stallion for a mare to breed for sport, the stallion's breed should not factor into the decision. Rather, focus on the stallion's abilities. In the same manner as described above to evaluate mares on a scale of 1-10, do the same for the stallions being considered, and compare the strengths and weaknesses. The stallion should complement the mare in as many categories as possible. Without a doubt, the stud fee will be the smallest expense in this operation!

Remember that the famous stallions in Europe are famous because they bred thousands of mares and have produced well. I would be leery of breeding to "a son of" a famous stallion unless he is a great athlete on his own.

Breeding show jumpers is a passion for most breeders. It's like having a lottery ticket that takes four years before the draw takes place. There will be many products of a breeding program that aren't particularly special for the sport of show jumping. It's important from a business perspective to cull the ones that are not good enough, or they will eat up all the profit from the good ones.

All of the young horses should be evaluated every year, and the evaluations should be written down on paper. As breeders we are eternal optimists and believe they will get better if we just wait another year... but in a way we need to be ruthless and realistic!!! Sell the ones that aren't good enough for the top of the sport, inexpensive and early, or maybe even give some away if needed. This does not make them bad horses, just a tough investment to keep investing in.

There are few things more rewarding than seeing one of your young horses perform in the ring even if it's just taking care of a fifteen year old rider. And one day there may be one good enough to see in the ring at Spruce Meadows!

GET TO KNOW JASIMINE WIGGINS

How old were you when you started riding?

I started riding Western when I was 4. I started riding English when I was 6.

Where did you ride growing up?

I started riding at Paramount Stables with Joe Ifko in Dewinton. When I was 11, I moved to Attaché Stables and started riding with Jonathan Asselin. Currently I am still at Attaché Stables riding with Gail Greenough, who has coached me off and on ever since I have been at Attaché.

When did you start showing?

When I was 6 I did my first ever pole class.

Do you get nervous?

No, just anxious. I get so excited to show!

What would you do if you weren't riding?

I would definitely be involved in some other sport. I have always enjoyed swimming and skiing. Who knows, maybe in another life I'd be a professional swimmer.

When did you buy your first horse?

My parents support me financially and bought me my first pony when I was 7. God bless them!

What horses do you have now? What are they all like?

Right now I have two horses: Wesley, a little grey horse always looking to be the centre of attention; he has a huge personality and loves to jump. Aberdeen is my other horse; he is a beautiful bay stallion with a huge heart! He is one of the sweetest horses I've ever known and I am super excited to see what our partnership will bring us in the future.

Do you have any advice for young riders?

Stick with it! Horses in general take a lot of time, so be prepared to spend most of all your time with them. But if you enjoy them as much as I do, it won't really be a problem.

Name three things most people don't know about you:

I am a certified lifeguard. I love studying political theory. In high school I won provincials in singles badminton – I was basically a badminton nerd.



Cross- Training

Tina Watkins E.S.T.E.E.B.W.2

Photo Credit Alex Grayton and Jessica Dooley

Cross-training. We have all heard the term 100 times. We all know we should be adding it into our program, but what is cross-training really, and how do we add it in?

Well, it's not as simple as just doing a couple of exercises. Cross-training needs to change and adapt with your horse as your horse's program and training evolve and build. Of course a Grand Prix horse cannot have the same cardio focus day as a kid's pony. It is a very important part of a program, skipping over cross-training is a real detriment to the horse.

In very simple terms from a physical development perspective, your rides should alternate between a cardio-focused day and a strength-focused day. Switching back and forth between cardio and strength ensures that your horse is using different muscle groups in a different capacity from day to day. This allows the muscles to be challenged through increased carry and collection on the strength day, and repetitive stress and oxygen exchange on the cardio day.

The exercises themselves may vary, or even just the way in which you perform the exercises may vary.

Think of the strength day as the day in which you are trying to climb up a step in your training. This could be when you are asking for a more engaged frame, or when you are demanding more in the lateral movements, and asking your horse to hold more collection through all of the gaits. A strength day might also mean including a larger and more technical gymnastic exercise.

It is important to remember that as you move up in jumping height and width, a horse needs an enormous amount of power to propel its body weight over the fence. This power comes from the ring of muscles that produce collection. I often hear my show jumper clients say that collection is for dressage riders. In fact, jumping horses require a higher degree of collection as they power up for the take off phase of the jump than dressage horses need (until the dressage horses reach higher levels of training and competition.)



It is important to afford your horses frequent walk breaks on strength days. The tissue being taxed needs a chance to recover and drain. The warm up and cool down phases of your ride are also important considerations that need to be done every day.

After a strength day should come the cardio day. A cardio day should consist of repetitive exercise to build nutrient exchange in the muscles and help to increase the horse's efficiency. This is a very important aspect of training that is often missed, especially with horses that stable indoors. Practicing and building up cardio fitness is important for stressful situations, like competition, so that the body is able to keep up the flow of nutrients to areas that need it, and so that the body can drain waste products away from the muscles being taxed.

On cardio days, walk breaks should be less frequent but should be longer. It's important to ensure that the horse is able to fully recover its wind before starting the next set in the workout.

When designing or planning your strength and cardio days, be realistic and flexible with your own horse's needs and attitude. If you are supposed to do a strength day workout but your horse seems to have a bee in his bonnet and just needs a gallop to get it out of his system, then maybe harping on the strength workout isn't the best choice that day!

Another way to 'cross-train' with your horse is to vary the setting of your workouts. Nowadays so many stables and facilities have state-of-the-art footing, which is a nice thing to have for jumping, turning, and so on. But riding around on flat and perfect footing all the time is a bit sterile. It can be a healthy addition to your program to include

walking on trails, climbing hills, walking through snow in the winter months, and even traversing across hills. Of course it is important to be mindful of everyone's safety when changing terrain, but it can break up the monotony of riding around in an arena all the time as well as strengthening your horse.

I wish you the best of luck at the upcoming spring shows. Remember, having your horse evaluated by a professional therapist or your veterinarian can give you the information you need to adjust your training program now to be stronger and to help fend off injuries!

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OSTEOCHONDROSIS IN SHOW JUMPING HORSES

Shawn Mattson BSc, DVM, DVSc

Osteochondritis dissecans (OCD) is one of the most important clinical entities encountered in show jumping horses with respect to developmental orthopedic disease. The veterinary literature suggests that the prevalence of osteochondrosis is approximately 25-30% in Warmblood breeds¹. Many of you have likely heard of the term “bone chips” which is a common term for osteochondral (bone and cartilage) fragments within a joint. These are often encountered in young horses that have joint swelling, mild to moderate lameness, and are just starting in work. Many of you have also encountered this term during pre-purchase examinations in both sound and unsound horses. The diagnosis of OCD does not necessarily mean the deal is off, it does not necessarily mean your horse requires surgery, and it does not mean your horse cannot perform up to its full potential. OCD can occur in any joint, and treatment and prognosis depends on the joint involved, the soundness of the horse, and the intended purpose of the horse.

What is OCD?

Osteochondrosis is a failure of the bone underlying the articular cartilage to form properly from the skeleton's cartilage template². In scientific terms, this is known as a failure of endochondral ossification. This failure of the subchondral bone (bone underlying the cartilage) results in a “weak spot” in the joint. Normal biomechanical forces applied to the joint during exercise then result in fissure of the articular cartilage and formation of osteochondral fragments in the joint. The inflammatory mediators that are released into the joint during this process often result in joint swelling, pain and varying degrees of lameness. Some horses with OCD however do not show any clinical signs.

What causes OCD?

OCD is a complex disease and is multifactorial in origin². Biomechanical influences, failure of



Figure 1 Two year old warmblood with an OCD lesion in the right hock

adequate blood supply to the articular cartilage, nutrition and genetics are all thought to play a role in OCD². Considering that OCD causes areas of weakness within a joint, normal biomechanical forces from exercise create OCD in well known predilection sites within a joint. Changes in arterial blood supply to the articular cartilage at specific “windows in time” may also be a mechanism for the development of OCD. Mineral deficiencies (low copper), mineral imbalance, and high energy diets may also play a role in the development of OCD. OCD is seen in horses that have a large variation in genetic background suggesting that the method of inheritance is complex¹. There is a large variation in heritability depending on the joint involved. For example, in Dutch Warmblood horses, the heritability of hock OCD is much higher than for stifle OCD¹. As well, it has been shown that affected stallions can produce offspring free from OCD, and foals with OCD can be born to clean sires¹.

Which joints are involved?

OCD can affect virtually any joint in the horse's skeleton. The most common joints affected in Warmbloods are the hocks, stifles, and fetlocks.

Other affected joints we see occasionally include the coffin joint, pastern joint, carpus, shoulder joint, and joints in the neck.

What are the clinical signs?

The clinical signs can vary from none to an acute onset of joint swelling, and varying degrees of lameness. For example, horses that have hock OCD (Figure 1) will often develop joint swelling at a young age with minimal lameness, whereas horses with shoulder OCD will not have recognizable swelling but will have moderate to severe lameness as a weanling or yearling. Horses with stifle OCD (Figure 2) often have joint swelling and mild to moderate lameness.

How is OCD diagnosed?

OCD is diagnosed following a thorough lameness and radiographic examination that identifies the suspected joint(s). Occasionally arthroscopic examination of a joint is necessary to confirm the diagnosis.

How is OCD treated?

Arthroscopic surgery to remove osteochondral fragments is the most often recommended treatment option for horses that have OCD. At our practice, OCD is the most common reason for performing arthroscopy. Removal of osteochondral fragments significantly improves joint health. Often, radiographs underestimate the degree of joint injury. Arthroscopy allows you to not only remove “chips” from the joint but to debride the “parent bone” down to healthy tissue and to debride loose or frayed cartilage. Arthroscopy is recommended for horses that demonstrate clinical signs and are to be used as competition horses.

Surgery is not always required however. For example, a horse that has hock OCD but no joint swelling or lameness, and is used primarily for pleasure or low level jumping does not need surgery. Additionally, horses that have stifle OCD that have a small lesion with no fragmentation can heal with conservative management³. There are also horses in our practice that compete at a very high level with OCD that are sound and going without surgical intervention. It is important to consult with your veterinarian to determine if surgery is necessary once the diagnosis of OCD is made.

What is the prognosis?

The prognosis following arthroscopic surgery depends on the joint involved, the severity of the lesion, and the intended purpose of the horse. For example, in jumping horses, a two year old warmblood with hock OCD has an excellent prognosis for athletic soundness following surgery; a two year old warmblood with stifle OCD has a good prognosis for athletic soundness following surgery, and a yearling warmblood with shoulder OCD has a poor to guarded prognosis for athletic soundness following surgery. Jumping horses with fetlock OCD can have a guarded to excellent prognosis following surgery depending on the location within the joint and the presence or absence of concurrent osteoarthritis. Careful clinical and radiographic examination by your veterinarian is important to determine the best treatment option for your horse.



Figure 2 Yearling warmblood with large OCD lesion in the left stifle

Diplomate, American College of Veterinary Surgeons

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Photo Credit Alex Grayton

How to properly fold a blanket

1) Hold the blanket by the spine.



2) Fold the blanket in half lengthwise on your knee. Avoid using the floor if possible to keep the blanket clean.



3) Take the blanket at the middle and fold in half.



4) Pull the blanket up behind the blanket rack or stall guard and fold in half over top of the guard so that it lays neatly.



5) Gather up straps or buckles and neatly tuck them out of site.



This will help keep your barn aisle neat and tidy not to mention your blankets clean and easy to get at. This is also a good way to fold blankets for storage. For more 'Tips and Tricks' go to www.albertashowjumpers.com



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STRIDE CONTROL WITH BETH UNDERHILL

At the end of 2014, Canadian show jumping team veteran Beth Underhill came to Alberta to put on a clinic hosted at Horse in Hand Ranch in Red Deer.

Alberta Show Jumpers had the opportunity to catch up with Beth at the clinic, and inquired about a favorite exercise for these situations. Beth explained one of the more common issues she comes across: "Mostly we need the ability to create stride control. We need to be really aware of how much the sport has changed and has become so sophisticated. Lines are often on the half stride; horses and riders need to be able to jump the water jump and then box up the step to the pair of verticals. The horses need that education, and the riders need that education."

Beth suggests always having some sort of exercise set up in the arena with poles. She explained that she rarely jumps her horses up to full height at home, but she is constantly working with poles and caveletti to improve stride control.

At the clinic in Red Deer, Beth set up bending lines so that the riders could use the shape of the line to determine the appropriate number of strides.

"I like to work early in the clinic on stride control between caveletti on a bending line, keeping it simple, and then as we progress we see how that helps to influence the bigger lines later."

Throughout the weekend-long clinic, Beth stressed the importance of fundamentals and basics. She was adamant that many riders simply "lack discipline in the basics. It's so much about the rideability and not just jumping the height. It's about repetition, doing lots of simple exercises, being strong in the foundation, not allowing the horses to shift one way or the other, and not allowing the rider to get sloppy about the presentation."

These are some great words of wisdom from one of Canada's most effective and stylish riders!

Photo Credit Grayt Designs

TIDY BARN TIPS

HOLLY GRAYTON

Our barn is a small barn, so for me everything has its place and should always be put back there. If there is no right place for all your things, it can start to look a bit messy. Here are a few simple suggestions to keep things tidy in your tack room.

Have a container, cart, shelf, or wall box for the brushes and bottles that you use for grooming on a daily basis, it's best not to leave them out in the open. Brushes will of course carry dirt with them, and they will leave the dirt behind where ever you store them. Whatever you do use for grooming supply storage, make sure you can

Invest in small Rubbermaid bins. I keep as much as possible in small containers. This will help keep your small items organized and help to avoid having a junk drawer that nobody goes to because it's too overwhelming. Have a bin for horse boots, one for turnout boots, one for bandages, one for braiding bands and other small grooming items.

Learn to fold your blankets neatly and make sure everyone in your barn does (see article page 24). This makes a huge change to the look of your barn aisle, and if that's the only thing you change



easily clean both the container and the brushes themselves once a week.

Keep as much off the floor as possible. This means using hooks whenever possible, I have hooks everywhere! Hooks for the blankets, bridles, halters, and shanks, and hooks for coats. The more items you can keep off the floor, the cleaner those items will stay and the cleaner your floor will be.

Good brooms are a must. I keep a broom in every location one could want to use a broom: one in each barn, another in the wash rack, and one in the tack room. This way it is always easy to quickly grab a broom and sweep up whenever there is even just a small mess in between horses.

it will make a big impact. Try not to have too many blankets on a door, but the blankets that must be there should be folded neatly and lay flat against the door.

Mostly it's important to take pride in your barn and tack room. It should look presentable at all times – you never know when a potential client or customer will walk through the door, and their first impression of your barn will reflect on the care and attention that you give your horses.

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Job Focus:

Body Worker and Massage Therapist

How many weeks do you work each year?

About 45 weeks per year.

What is the pay range?

Depending on the therapist's education and background and what the area is able to support, the range is between \$40 and \$140 per massage treatment session.

What are the positives and negatives in your work?

Positives: It's wonderful to have a different work environment every day, and it's a great feeling to make a change in a soul's life. To be with the horses and facilitate healing, to work with the owners and riders, and develop a program that helps horses become strong athletes is really amazing. I love the research aspect, trying to find new ways to help the horses. I love the challenge of a horse that is already doing well the best – finding those little things that could stave off lameness and disease in the future, and make an athlete that is already performing well move to that next level.

Negatives: The down side is the driving, cold barns, long hours, body fatigue and that it's hard to turn off the 'therapist brain' at social functions or horse shows... but truly, I wouldn't want to anyway!

What schooling do you have to do to become a massage therapist?

At the moment schooling for therapists is not regulated, so it is up to the end user (horse owner) to ask some questions when they hire a body

worker. Personally I have focused on my own education and hold several degrees and diplomas from multiple schools. I think the best way to find out if your body worker has a minimum standard of hours of practical experience is to ask if they have liability insurance, and if they qualify to be part of a professional association for Equine Body Workers.

Is it necessary to have a background in horses to be a therapist?

For sure! I have taught Equine Body Work courses to many people that thought that working with horses would be a very romantic job, where you and the horse were at one and they would stand perfectly still and enjoy every minute of their session. The reality is that performance horses are athletes, and athletes get sore. Horses talk through body language. When they are sore, their body language is going to express that. Without horse savvy, this can be a very tricky and sometimes dangerous job.

After school how do you start out in this field?

As in any field, building relationships is key to getting a start. Your mastery of body work is going to come through working on horses, and it will take hundreds of horses to gain your feel and hone your technique. To gain access to those horses you have to get out into the horse community and introduce yourself. Horse people are not easily sold on sub-par services. If they cannot feel a change in their horse's way of going, they will not see the value in the service you are providing. I sell my services based on the value the owner is getting. A healthy and sound horse lasts longer, is happier, is more willing to do their job, moves better, fatigues slower – all of which leads to more success in the competition arena!

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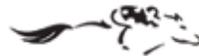
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